

**TESTIMONY OF
KURT BARWIS
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
BRISTOL HOSPITAL
BEFORE THE
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
Monday, March 15, 2010**

H.B. No. 5027, An Act Concerning the University of Connecticut Health Center's
Facilities Plan

My name is Kurt Barwis, and I am President and Chief Executive Officer of Bristol Hospital. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Bristol Hospital in support of H.B., No. 5027, An Act Concerning the University of Connecticut Health Center's Facilities Plan.

While the proposal for the UConn Health Network requires more detail, conceptually this appears to be the most realistic plan that I have seen to date. From the information that has been made available, the proposal reasonably addresses the UConn Health Center's issues and concerns in a manner that any hospital or medical center would utilize to address them. Previous proposals from UConn involved constructing a new, larger hospital when studies commissioned by the State demonstrate that there is no need for additional beds in the region. The current proposal focuses more on renovation and building a patient tower which is more economical and appropriate.

Including other hospitals in this process is critical to the success of the proposed Health Network and paramount to attracting federal dollars. For this, I am appreciative of UConn's consideration of including Bristol Hospital along with other providers in the region. Bristol Hospital is supportive of advancing our state's medical school to top tier status to attract and retain medical students and increasing the number of medical and dental school slots. We are eager to participate in this process; however, as the overall proposal develops and becomes more granular, continuation of an inclusive and open process will be essential for our continued support. Our continued support is further conditioned on the significant objectives and scope of the proposal staying true to what has been presented thus far.

Bristol Hospital is excited at the prospect of engaging in conversations with UConn and other hospitals to design a system that will improve the delivery of healthcare in Connecticut and create jobs for our residents. We are confident that if we can collaborate in open, honest dialogue this plan will succeed and the state will have accomplished a very important mission that will result in educational and economic growth.